Home is where the heart is

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Home is where the heart is

by AtticusCrete

Summary

When Will is grief stricken only one person will do..

Welcome to the Dr Plushy Pants AU where there is humour, tenderness, familiar faces, different deaths (squee), and some angst, corresponding fluff, slow burn, and divergences (Franklyn lives!). Watch for tags for each chapter/part. Canon adjacent. Maybe a second cousin twice removed - some events out of sequence.

It spans beyond the three seasons, and starts with 'a terrible name for a Museum', I've written bits from along the timeline. The ending of the whole series is already written. I'm currently going back to fill in the gaps.

And sorry about the titles, I'm rubbish at titles, and summaries, and notes, *shrugs* in my first four weeks of writing I clocked just under 100,000 words, what can I say? Feedback and friendliness gratefully received. I answer all comments, though it can take me a bit of time.

In real life I'm an archaeologist, and have other things I'm supposed to write and read. But I'm always delighted to hang out here...

There's no place like home

When Jimmy came into the lab he found Will sitting on a chair crying and Beverly with her arms round him muttering soothing words. 'What happened?' He asked Brian, 'is it Hannibal?' Brian looked at him oddly. 'No. why would it be?' 'Well there's something going on there and I've never seen Will in such a state.'

Both men looked at Will who was taking great gulps trying to swallow his sobs. Beverly was rubbing his back, shushing him like a small child. Gradually Will calmed down just sobbing occasionally now.

Beverly looked up at the other two men and mouthed to them 'one of the dogs died'. Oh. That explained it then. 'Which one?' 'Buster', 'the ugly one?' 'What?' 'Sorry, you know what I mean though.' 'Yeah, alright'. They all looked at Will. He looked in no state to be there but they knew Jack was on his way in from the scene they'd been at the previous day. Will was supposed to have a profile. At the moment it didn't look like he had anything.

None of them liked the thought of Will coming up with zero, zilch, nada, for Jack. That wouldn't go well. Bev got out her phone looked up a number and sent a brief text. They rallied round. 'So, tell us about Buster, the best things'

15 minutes later Will was still going strong about all the qualities of the little dog. He still looked wrecked but also salvageable, previously he'd looked as though it would have been best to sink him. Beverly gently steered the conversation to the first of the bits of evidence. 10 minutes later Jack arrived.

The next hour went surprisingly smoothly. They got a working profile together, they found new angles on the evidence and it looked like Will might survive. And then of course it had to happen, Jack mentioned the pet that the family annihaltor had taken with him. Will's bottom lip trembled. Jack, impervious to the looks he was getting from the other three carried on as though the animal didn't matter, and suddenly Will was shrieking. Real ear piercing shrieks. Hysteria personified. Jack backed away his hands outstretched palms up in front of him, a kind of 'woah, wtf'. Jimmy and Brian were trying to either get out the door or get some water or something. Bev was trying not to flap but get a hand on Will.

At that moment Alana Bloom arrived and added to the general hysteria by shouting at Jack 'I told you not to break him!' 'I didn't do anything we were just talking and he went loco' 'I don't believe you, you promised! You're supposed to protect him. You're supposed to be his bedrock!' 'I am his bedrock. I do more for him than anyone else! He's the most important person in the team.. err I didn't mean that you're all very important..' the whole team glared at Jack and another round of shouting broke out. Recriminations, threats, jealousies, petty grievances all got aired. And Will was still squealing. It was all undignified and very unprofessional and it was a good thing that they had all had to check their firearms into the safe whilst in the building.

Hannibal walked in to the middle of this commotion. The sight of the doctor looking impeccably dressed, the model of calm and cool collectedness was like a bucket of cold water over them. Everyone shut up. Even Will stopped shrieking and now just stood crying once again. Hannibal held out his hand 'Will, come to me'. And Will did. No questions or hesitation. Hannibal put his arm round him as Will fitted himself into his side. Wordlessly he handed Will a handkerchief. 'Blow' Will blew his nose noisily and hiccuped a few times.

'Agent Crawford, I'm going to take Will away now. If he is well enough and I think he will be looked after appropriately he might consider returning tomorrow. Good day everyone'. He looked round sternly, but nodded slightly at Beverly, 'Ms Katz.' He guided Will out the door and the team could hear their footsteps echoing down the hallway outside. They were all quiet.

Then Jimmy said 'God, when he's like that Dr Plushy Pants just makes me ..' he did a sort of sexy shiver, which they could all resonate with at some level 'I just want one like that' he stuttered. They looked at each other. Jack threw up his hands. 'This isn't over' he grumbled as he left the lab.

The remaining four looked at each other, a number of different thoughts going through each of their brains, 'really?' 'Who will be all stern' 'yeah, and hot' 'yeah, and well dressed' 'yeah and sort of in charge and domineering in a good way' 'really?' 'Yeah, a bit' they contemplated the possible outworking of Will's rescue by the good doctor.

'So what was that all about?' Alana looked round at them, 'Buster died, Jack said something stupid, Will got upset, oooh Alana, don't cry, oooh sorry' Beverly threw her arms round Dr Bloom who clutched at her 'nooo, not Buster, I loved him'. She hung on to Beverly like her life depended on it. Brian and Jimmy looked at each other 'I'm sure deep down you're very upset too?' 'Yes, definitely, I definitely need a hug and a smooch right now' 'I wouldn't want you to be sad' 'you're good friend' 'boo hoo hoo'.

The curious incident of the dog in the night time

Chapter Summary

Hannibal and Will talk self worth, Hannibal, Will, Alana and Jack talk about the Chesapeake Ripper. Cameo by Matthew a Brown, he'll be back!

Hannibal is sitting on Will's couch with his feet out in front of him with Cephy partly lying across them. Will is making coffee and Hannibal is basically letting him. He has been surprised by how upset he has found himself over the last few days. Going with Will to the vet had been very sad. Surprisingly so. He isn't a pet person but even he could see the loss that Buster meant. And he'd been surprised to miss the affection of the little dog. Cephy seems to have made an attempt to fill the gap.

The incident in the lab had also been distressing, in part because it is an ongoing reminder that whatever Will might say he is still fundamentally not ok. He and Hannibal talk, he does all the things they discuss to protect his mental wellbeing, he has made some efforts in the direction of improving his feelings of self worth and self preservation. And still. In part Hannibal thinks it is to do with the relationship Will has with Jack Crawford.

Hannibal still likes Jack, likes his wife Bella too. But he and Jack just don't agree on almost anything to do with Will. Jack constantly views Will as an antagonist. Hannibal sees Will as a reluctant but willing-enough participant, possibly in his own down-fall. He continually fails to help Jack see Will as a member of the team, who fits in the team, and Hannibal deeply regrets this. It means that Will is regularly singled out, or excluded, or made to feel marginal in some way. The team have worked out ways to bypass this, but it's frustrating. And Hannibal knows Will must feel rejected in some way.

Not by him though. He feels as though their lives have got ever more entwined. This ongoing situation with Abigail though has the potential to drive a wedge between them. She has been very effective in that regard. It is only because they have endeavoured to be completely honest with each other that they have avoided disaster. Beverly has continued to be a loyal ally to them both. She navigates it well, and also honestly. Jimmy is a little partisan to him, and Zeller a little partisan to Will. So they have a balance. And everyone is clear.

He is increasingly clear. Despite the havoc it will bring down on his own familial situation he wants Will. With all his messiness, his stress, his anxiety, and fear, he suspects Will might be the love of his life. Or could be. He thinks Will shares some of this feeling. They've talked about their friendship. What they both feel about it. This had partly been prompted by Abigail's behaviour, so in a way Hannibal feels a kind of gratitude to her. But he's realistic about it. Abigail's behaviour was in no way intended to help. The opposite if anything. But sometimes a negative can help you see the positive.

Will joins him in the living room and puts a coffee down on the table nearest his elbow. He lowers himself onto the couch beside Hannibal and leans on him. Hannibal puts one arm round him and Cephy shifts slightly to accommodate Wills feet encroaching on her space. Hannibal strokes Will's head almost absently, and kisses his forehead.

'What happened?'

'It was stupid. Jack just wouldn't stop going on about the families and their pets being taken and it just got too much. I couldn't take any more. You know when you see kids in supermarkets or on buses and they're screaming and you think, yeah that's what I'd like to do in this situation. I just did the same thing.'

'I think you may have scared the others'

'I know. I'll say sorry to them. I say sorry to them all the time. I'm a rubbish friend.'

Hannibal kisses his forehead again

'Would you like to try that sentence again?'

'Oh god. Must I?'

'We agreed.'

'Yeah. Ok. We did. I will thank my friends for being there for me. I will demonstrate gratitude that they helped me. I am permitted to let people know when I need help. Needing help is not wrong. I love my friends and I am loved by them. We all have different gifts and though my behaviour is sometimes challenging my friends understand that I am not just my behaviour at any given time. They are my friends and they understand. Is that ok? Have I reframed it better?'

'Do you believe any of what you just said?'

'Actually? Yeah. Surprisingly. I do believe it mostly. And I am positive really. God I just feel so dragged down. I should stop shouldn't I? I told Bev that if I was still standing six months in she should get me to resign. That's not far off now. I want to stop. '

'Do you need to rehearse the reasons to stop again?'

'No. I want to stop. Or at least, I want to want to. God Hannibal I'm sorry. I feel like I just lean on you the whole time'

'And we have discussed that my particular personality likes that you lean, at least when we both acknowledge that that is what you are doing and what I am doing. I welcome the opportunity to offer you support. But I would prefer not to prop you up simply to give you the opportunity to undermine yourself and your health again. Physically how are you now?'

'Ok. Since the last bout of sleepwalking I've been ok. The stuff from the doctor has been good. I've accepted the fuzziness as a side effect, so I'll be glad to come off them, but it helps

I think. They more or less knock me out overnight. You must have noticed when you've been here?'

'The absence of witty repartee is sometimes trying I will admit, particularly at two am, but I am learning to live with it. Do you want another drink? Or shall I make something to eat?'

'What I mostly want is to lie here a bit more and maybe make out a bit?'

'Ahh. So you created a situation from which you could be rescued so that you could be the damsel in distress and I the knight on a black Bentley?'

'Not intentionally. But I'll take it. As the damsel in distress do I get kissed by the knight?'

'As well as during it?'

'I think I've mentioned kissing. That means not talking.'

Hannibal smiles at Will and shifts slightly so that Will is leaning more on him, Cephy moves to facilitate their shifting positions and then grumbles loudly when she is left without feet to sit on. Hannibal idly scratches her head before requiring his arm to hold Will in place as they leisurely kiss, almost lying along the sofa. They've got kissing down to a fine art. Somehow, at some point in the last few weeks they've gone from the occasional touch, to regular touch, to occasional kissing to regular kissing.

The on the road episodes had nearly kick started something further, but the stress of Will being Will has left them in a sort of limbo. There isn't unresolved sexual tension, because Will is too distressed most of them time to initiate it, and Hannibal is too worried about Will, and frankly concerned about whether he should formally refer him to initiate something more either.

They have evolved rather into this warm physical intimacy. Will is slightly worried they will get stuck here, but just occasionally one of them breaks and there is a moment or more of absolutely searing passion and he knows that if he ever gets his head together everything could take off spectacularly. As it is. He adores these languid periods of just fitting around Hannibal. He rather adores Hannibal.

Will knows he will have to go back in tomorrow. He also know Hannibal will call Jack. Bella is not well so it's not great timing. But Hannibal could have been a diplomat. He knows Hannibal is having them both to dinner tomorrow. He has to decide whether or not he's coming too. Slightly awkward just the four of them. Perhaps a bit obvious. But maybe ok. If Bella is well enough. If she's not Jack might feel ganged up on. And that won't help. So, maybe he'll go if Bella is going. That seems like a plan.

'You mentioned food before. All that kissing has made me hungry. Is that wretched of me?'

'I think you are just hoping for the more comfortable position on the couch. I wonder if I could persuade you to firstly move your bed up stairs and then buy a decent couch for in here. This is not as bad as Beverley's couch but it is a close run thing. Perhaps they are related?'

'Oh, you mean Vlad? Isn't it awful. Neither beautiful or useful?'

'A useful axiom for many things in life'

'One out of two is manageable'

'Nought for naught?'

'Did I mention the hungry?'

Will's cell phone goes off, Hannibal sighs as Will reaches for it.

'Yeah, hey Bev. Yes, thanks I'm ok now. Sure he's still here do you want to talk to him. Oh, ok.' Hannibal raises his eyebrows but Will waves his hand

'No, I think he's going to be here for a bit? (Hannibal nods assuming it's still him they are talking about)'

Good. Now you're going to think I buried the lead, but Jack is looking for you. It's about Abel Gideon.'

'Oh? He's the guy in the BSHCI? What about him?' He shrugs at Hannibal not sure where any of this is going

'He's claiming he's the Chesapeake Ripper. There was an incident at the hospital. He's killed a nurse. It looks like the wound man kill, Jack wants you to take a look. If he is, then it'll be a huge weight off Jack's mind. You know the ripper hasn't ripped in the last two years'

'Ever since Gideon was admitted?'

'Yeah. It may be a coincidence, but maybe not. Can you come now? And can you bring Hannibal, we're thinking about using him to run offence with Chilton if he is at all stroppy'

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In the hospital Frederick Chilton is endeavouring to partially re-cast blame. Gideon had been caught on camera so there is no question about his guilt. He was back in his cell. Jack, Alana, Hannibal and Will are in Chilton's office.

'What I don't understand is why he was left alone with a nurse, unsupervised?' Jack is furious and Chilton is a handy scape goat.

Chilton slumps in his office chair 'he's been a model patient, and security has got a little looser round him. He slipped his cuffs. Dr Graham, I imagine you'll want to see the ward where it happened?' Will nods and is accompanied out by an orderly. Will is already absorbed in what he's doing so he doesn't pay much attention.

p>'Come to look at our very own crime scene have you? You looked like you know the boss? Is that why he called you'

'I'm Will Graham, I help out on serial killer cases, I work at Quantico, I'm a teacher with a badge. But I do know Frederick, a little anyway, he's friends with my...' for a second Will can't think of how to describe Hannibal and their relationship, so he ducks it and grins, still not making eye contact 'yet another psychiatrist I'm afraid'

Matthew smiles back at him 'there's a lot of them about. We met before you know. A while back. Don't worry no one looks at faces, just at clothes or badges.'

He turns another corner and unlocks a door 'here you go. My instructions are to give you privacy and then take you back to reception. Ok. That's what you're expecting right?'

Will nods slowly. Almost not hearing what Matthew Brown is saying to him. He walks into the room and pulls the door closed behind him.

Whilst Will is escorted to the hospital room, Hannibal, Alana and Jack speak with Dr Chilton. The conversation revolves around whether it is possible for Gideon to be the Ripper or if he has been psychically driven to induce this particular psychosis. It's a tense conversation with much defensiveness on Chilton's part and careful scrutiny by Dr Bloom and Dr Lecter. Eventually there is agreement that Dr Bloom will speak with Gideon.

As they wait in the room Hannibal idly glances over the bank of images from security cameras around the hospital. One of them catches his eye. It's the orderly walking back from the medical examination room where he just left Will. Hannibal looks harder, he fishes his glasses out of an inside pocket. The image is grainy, the man is just off camera now and Hannibal has to look the others over before he spots him again. It looks like Matthew Brown. Abigail Hobbs' cousin. Who stalked Will during that time in the cabin. Maybe Will didn't notice?

'Frederick, may I ask what the name of your orderly is.

'Hmm? Oh. Show me who you mean'

Hannibal points him out on a camera that shows the reception area where Em/Matthew is talking to another member of staff.

'Matty? He's been here a couple of months. Very popular with the staff and inmates. Can't do enough for anyone. Nice man. Looks after his cousin. She's not been well apparently. Why do you ask?'

Hannibal pauses and debates what to do. He's pre-empted by Jack. 'Who are you looking at Dr. Lecter. Who's the guy?' 'I think it's just possible that it is Abigail Hobbs' cousin, Matthew Brown.

'but didn't he stalk Will? Back during the copycat kills?' Alana looks alarmed at the others. 'Didn't Will notice?'

'He might have been too pre-occupied to notice, and someone out of context is sometimes hard to place.' Alana looks a little doubtful, but shrugs agreement.

'Dr Chilton, would you be willing to send someone different to collect Will? I think we'd rather not make a big deal out of this so let's keep it simple. Ok?' Jack is smooth in this kind of situation and Frederick can only really agree.

'I can't believe it's the same person but of course. I wouldn't want to upset Dr Graham.

.....

when Dr Chilton leaves the room Hannibal quickly says 'I think we shouldn't tell Will. At least not right this moment. After this morning, I think it would be better to wait. Jack do you want to speak to him later on?'

'yes. I'll get one of the lab team to find out where he's living, see if we can get a bit of a picture. Dr. Bloom, Will Abigail tell you anything do you think?

'she might to get him off the hook if she thought he was on one'

'are you willing to play that angle?'

'if we think it will help, yes. I'll let you know what I find out. As soon as I can. I've an appointment with Abigail at the end of the day, so the timing is good.'

'alright then, I'll talk to Will after I hear back from you, before the end of the day. Does that suit Dr Lecter?'

'thank you. Yes. It puts my mind at rest.'

.....

Later, Jack, Alana and Will are back in Jack's office. Alana starts off 'it could be Gideon. But he might not know he is. Or me might think he is. Or he knows he is, or isn't. It's something of mess.'

'Did the room or body tell you anything Will, or are we nowhere on this?' Jack looks despondent. As though he's not expecting good news.

'I'm afraid I'm with Alana on this. It could be, or not. Wait, Jack let me finish. For the most part I'm inclined to say not. The ripper has never repeated any kill so far and this just doesn't quite have the feel of him. It feels like an understudy, when they've got the lines down, and they fit the costume and they've blocked the part, but they just don't have the same timing or rapport with the other actors. I think he's not. I'm sorry Jack.'

'Ok. Fair enough. Ok. That sounds about right. Dammit. We're nowhere on him. I'd just like to get him before I retire. Don't look alarmed, that's not for a few years yet!'

Will decides to not let on that the look on his face isn't one of alarm, but maybe relief.

It isn't that Will dislikes Jack. It is more that Jack is utterly ruthless when it comes to his single minded determination to apprehend perpetrators with 'evil minds'. The ruthlessness

extends to the exploitation of everyone within range, whether they are able to cope with the pressure or not.

as Alana and Will walk along the corridor away from Jack's office she says 'I'm sorry about earlier. In the lab. Are you ok? Did Hannibal take you home?'

'He did. He's good at that. We had quite a long conversation. We mostly talked about how I might avoid actually having a break down whilst doing this job. I'm practising some reframing exercises and the power of the word 'no', actually in my head I'm substituting 'fuck off' and I've found it's more effective.' Will sees Alana smile tentatively 'he's basically trying to help me view myself in such a way that I don't become another victim in this whole mess.'

'I noticed you brightened up when Jack mentioned retirement'

'Damn I was trying not to give that away' he smiles broadly at her, they pause as she's going in one direction and he in another 'I'm not so much worried about Jack but about what he gets his people to do, even if it's blatantly obvious they shouldn't be in the field' he shrugs 'see you later, thanks Alana.'

Will knows the story about the young trainee who disappeared, a suspected victim of the Chesapeake Ripper. Will still wonders what happened to Miriam Lass. Whether it was the Ripper or not. Whatever the reason Will doesn't want to be broken in the same way. He already knows he's vulnerable with his empathy and imagination, he can already see ways in which he might be permanently taken down.

His thinking about Miriam triggers something just faintly. He picks up his cell from the desk beside him and thumbs in the BSCHI number 'Frederick? It's Will Graham, again. Sorry. Have you got maybe ten minutes to spare me late this afternoon, I'd like to ask you about something.'

...

'So, Will, Miriam Lass, I only just recall her. What's your query?'

'Really I was wondering if you've ever talked to Gideon about her? I've looked up the dates and I think she went missing just around the time of his arrest. It's a bit unclear if she was seen after he he was detained because he came in for questioning a couple of times. If she was a victim of the Chesapeake Ripper and he is the ripper he'll know. Has he said anything?'

'He has claimed her, sort of. He claims he killed her and put her on display'

'that's interesting. She hasn't been found though has she?'

'Not to my knowledge, no. What's your thinking?'

'Jack has this idea that we might be able to lure the Ripper out (if it isn't Gideon) if we get something into the public arena linking Gideon and the Ripper.'

'that's not without its dangers.'

'You're right of course, but it might be worth it to find out if basically we can scale down the hunt for the Ripper in the knowledge he's safe and well with you.'

'I can see that. How do you propose achieving this end?

'Have you come across a tabloid journalist called Freddie Lounds?'

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Some say it will end in fire

Chapter Summary

> Abel Gideon, Matthew Brown and Miriam Lass, in one chapter? Astounding. The summaries? I'm just rubbish at summaries. But, hello, welcome, hope you're doing Ok? Fancy a cup of tea? Tea we can do, biscuits, glow in the dark pop tarts. Cheerful company. It's only 2am in the UK.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

> 'Jack, so, it's not perfect but overall I think it's a good plan. One that has a chance of working. What do you think? We've got Freddie Lounds on board, pretty much, once she could see the angle. Frederick Chilton is willing, and you know he can be a real twonk.'
>
> 'I can't believe we're getting in bed with Freddie Lounds. How's it going to play out then?'
>
> 'We'll out out the story about Gideon via tattlecrime.com Alana is going to talk to him first. You know, prep him without prepping him?'
>
> 'None of this psychic driving bullshit?'
>
> 'Nothing beyond what's already taken place.'
>
> 'Ok. So what else?'
>
> 'We're sort of hoping that if the Ripper sees it, and given he's the biggest fucking narcissist I've ever come across, he must have a permanent tab open for tattlecrime, well we hope it might push him into doing something, or being slightly more careless.'
>
> 'Ok. You know I'm a bit reluctant to trigger a, what do you call them, sounder? Yeah. A sounder. But you think there's not other way? Hang on let me get this'
>
> he answers his cell. It's a hang up. 'Weird, I've been getting a few of those, sorry go on.'
>
> 'Not where we get maybe even a minimum of control, no. We have to try Jack.'
>
> 'So, when does she want to run it?'
>
> 'That's the other thing. We envisaged running it as a kind of 2 year anniversary for Miriam Lass's disappearance. Thought it'd make a natural hook, along with the recent kill by Gideon. It's one of the reasons I wanted to check with you really.'

'Right. Ok. Shit. I still can't believe it's been two years. Two years.' He trails off and Will waits for him to come back from whatever hostile place his mind has taken him. It has blood and dark and sharp edges. The feeling rolls of Jack and Will has to work hard to keep it at bay.

'She was brave Jack. We can make this a good memorial too. It's a good hook. If Gideon is just a plagiarist, you know the Ripper won't let that stand, he'll make sure everybody knows it.'

'I know you fish, Will'

'I am a good fisherman Jack'

.....

'Why Dr Bloom, how delightful, quite sublime, to see you. I can't really believe I'm getting two visits in two days. Unless it's about our mutual friend the Ripper, and the mystery of his personhood. Never did like being called the Chesapeake Ripper. Oh of course, except when I do. And after all I don't have to convince you.'

'Dr Gideon. I don't want to waste your time. Shall we begin? We did speak about some of this yesterday. And It might help if you were able to.'

'Yes we did, and yes it might. And you'll be glad to know I've remembered some more. Isn't that just helpful of me? Maybe I hoped I'd see you again. Always a pleasure to have your fragrant presence. So, I thought about it and had a nice long think. It's one of my pleasures here. Time to think.'

'So what would you like to add?'

'Why Dr Bloom, add? Don't you know I'm all about taking away. Or at least swapping. I thought you knew that by now. My my, haven't you been paying attention? Lets have a little chat about that shall we?'

.....

'Alright then Doc? Get what you wanted? Yeah? We haven't met properly before, I'm Abigail's cousin, you know Em, Matthew?'

Alana looks at him, he seems pleasant and helpful. Of course it's possible he's also malicious and spiteful. Both Will and Hannibal have had run ins with him. But then Will is always a bit wobbly. And Hannibal is terribly overprotective, domineering even. So maybe they're exaggerating or at least have got it out of proportion.

'You've been good to her, Mr Brown. I'm sure you've helped her a lot.'

'Well family is family. Gotta help out where we can. You got any family?'

'Oh the usual. Siblings, parents, extended family too'

'None of your own? Nice woman like you?'

Alana doesn't say anything.

'I thought you were with that Doctor Graham isn't it? Abs said something about it. Or you're working on it. You'd be good together. The photos of you together at that dinner were nice.'

Alana smiles tightly. That may not quite be resolved yet, but she's not going to discuss it with a random orderly she doesn't know.

'So Mr Brown. How are you liking Baltimore? Are you settling in? Meeting people, making new friends?'

'Oh, I'm all about meeting new friends Dr Bloom. You should tell your friend Dr Graham that. I just want to be his friend. Be seeing you now. Don't forget to give your pass in.'

As Alana signs out she acknowledges to herself that there is just something slightly off about Matthew Brown. Even though it's hard to pin down exactly what that is.

.....

'His name is Dr Abel Gideon and strong evidence has surfaced that he's far more than just a mild mannered surgeon who cruelly murdered his wife. Maybe, just maybe, Gideon is the most sought after serial killer at large. A killer that has eluded the FBI for years and has baffled their most gifted profilers. And that serial killer? None other than the Chesapeake Ripper. This would explain why the Ripper has been silent for more than two years.'

.....

'What did you think of the article on Gideon on tattlecrime? And don't pretend you're not an avid fan! I've seen you sneaking a look.'

'Well he might see it for what it is'

'A provocation?' Hannibal inclines his head 'I know. Still it's the best we've got. I'm hoping he's annoyed enough to respond in some way. Yeah don't make that face. I know it's not ideal'

'I wasn't aware I was making a face'

'Yeah. It was your absence of face, face'

'Useful to know.'

'Yeah. Can you pass me the tea cloth'

Hannibal hands Will the tea cloth and he begins drying dishes.

'How are your colleagues?'

'Ok, I think. But fed up. We could do without Gideon, or even Freddie really. Guess what she said?'

'I hardly know where to begin. Pray tell me'

'She said we were just a bunch of psychopaths helping each other out. Yeah I thought you'd like it'

'She is very droll. On occasion.'

'I suppose. You know she has a crush on you?'

'Indeed. I was not aware. Remind me when next I am especially irritated by her'

'I will. Jack's a bit down. Bella. Not surprisingly, and the two year anniversary of one of his protégés disappearing'

'That explains something'

'What's that?'

'He dropped by earlier.'

'Alone?'

'I saw Bella this morning before she departed for a work conference of some kind'

'How's she in general terms?'

'Generally? As you might expect. More particularly she is, in her own inimitable way courageous. She is also bored of being ill. Of her body letting her down.'

'I guess I can understand that. What about Jack. Don't say anything if you can't.'

'Jack is certainly outwith any form of patient confidentiality, as a friend I might say he is dreading the loss of his wife. He finds it hard to think about anything else. And is thinking of other losses too. The student you mentioned. He is taking both quite hard. He's also troubled by a sequence of phone hang ups.'

'Yeah. It caused a bit of an argument in the lab. He tried to get them tracked. But it wasn't so easy. He and Z nearly came to blows. Jack almost shouted. He only does that when he's really angry. I'm sorry for what's going on.'

'That doesn't make me less aware of what he is subjecting you too. I can let those two things exist in parallel.'

'Sympathy for him and frustration too?'

'Astute as ever'

'I wish I wasn't. I wish I just couldn't feel any of that. So I could just stop before it stops me.'

'Have you had the scan yet?'

Will carries on drying up cups. Just for once Hannibal has come to Wolf Trap. Will has barely been here for what seems like forever. The dogs are excited to have both their favourite two legs. One who smells like them and one who smells like sausage and other delicious things. Cephy in particular adores Hannibal.

'Will? Scan.'

'What? Yeah. Sorry. I've made a new appointment for it. I'm definitely going tomorrow. For sure.'

'Do you need me to go with you?'

'I don't need you to. It'd be nice if you could but you've got morning patients. So it's fine. It's at 11:30 We've got an early lab meeting. Bev said she'd come with me if you were working.'

'I do have patients then unfortunately. Will you call me straight afterwards? Please do ask Beverly to go with you.'

'Yeah. I will. It's the noise more than anything in a scanner. It can trip me just on its own.'

'Ask if they have a live feed so they can talk to you rather than simply ear plugs'

'Ok. That sounds like a good idea.'

'Is the medication helping at all?'

'Helps with the sleep. Nightmares not so much. I can't decide if the beta blockers are worth it or not. You got earlies tomorrow?'

'I have. Do you want me to stay and leave first thing? Whenever I go it will be in the dark.'

Will bites his bottom lip. Earlier in the day whilst he was in his classroom he'd watched the stag walk out the door and down the corridor. He knows he's got a raised temperature and his head has been bad. He just has to get this stuff with the weird angel torture thing done. Get the Gideon and Ripper stuff done. Christmas, the holidays are in sight. It's manageable. Surely.

But truthfully? He dreads it. Dreads being on his own. Dreads being at home. Dreads going to sleep. Dreads the dark. It's been like this since the photographs. Matthew Brown invaded his space and now it feels compromised, like he's desperately bailing water to keep afloat. It was his safe harbour. His anchorage. And now he's going down with the sinking ship. Even the protection circle stuff is making him anxious. And whether Hannibal will be glad he knows about Mischa and that maybe they should have told him straight away.

He's tried to limit his time in Wolf Trap. Fortunately they got away for a bit, for the case. And the thing with the shots was funny. But the case is horrible. And Will can feel the similarities. This guy is on fire. It's how Will feels. On fire and drowning. He's scared. Truly. Scared. Maybe Alana is right. His main driver is fear. And that's all he's good for. He knows fear is

the opposite of love, the enemy of love. Not hate. Good old fashioned terrifying, freeze you in your bones fear.

He is afraid to be alone. Maybe if Hannibal goes then he could ring one of the others? He can't keep leaning on Hannibal if he's not prepared to stop. That's really unfair. He fears he is close to abusing the friendship, jeopardising the relationship that is gradually building. If none of the others are free he could call his dad. Just have a long call. That'd be ok, surely? Since leaving Hannibal's house he's spent one night actually on his own in Wolf Trap, and he made himself stay up all night. He hasn't told Hannibal any of this. He knows he should. Knows he said he would. But there's just so much of him that's wrong.

'Will? I think that cup is dry now'

Will looks down at the cup he is compulsively drying in his hands. He hangs it up and takes the next one and begins drying it.

'Will? Stop drying up. They can air dry. Come and sit with me. Please'

Will allows himself to be encouraged to the couch. He sits slightly on the edge and at a distance until Hannibal pulls him closer. Will is mildly terrified he might cry. He can't speak. The lump in his throat, all the horror and the terror and the long darkness that surrounds them threatening to spill over. God he feels crazier than usual. Fuck. He's going to have a panic attack. He just about gets the words out 'panic attack. Nothing you said. Coming'

Hannibal lies back on the couch and pulls Will down so he's resting against him. Will closes his eyes and lets the panic overtake him in a wave of nothingness. When he comes to, three hours have passed. Hannibal is still lying beneath him, holding him. He's asleep. But somehow he got Will's shoes off and a couple of blankets over both of them.

Cephy is sitting across Hannibal's shoes beside the couch.

Will pulls himself up and goes to the bathroom, stands in the shower for ten minutes. Where he lets himself cry. After five more minutes or so Hannibal steps in behind him and Will just turns and leans on him and gives up on the pretence of being ok. Hannibal feels his forehead.

'You're too hot. I think you have a raised temperature. Let's see if we can get you into bed. And in the morning you'll decide about going in to work or not. Thank you for not protesting. Let's see how you're doing tomorrow. No plans are made that cannot be unmade, sometimes should be. How fortunate I am to be with someone so unfailingly unpredictable.'

Will almost smiles at this. 'No lakes this time'

'I am grateful for such mercies. You weren't going to tell me. I know. I understand why not. I have no intention of castigating you. I realise it wasn't at some point even a choice. It was just the natural way these things go for you. I won't abandon you Will. I know you don't yet trust that you can have those expectations of me. Such things take time and are earned rather than assumed.'

'I feel so unwell. Crazy too. But I'm not this kind of crazy. Something is not right. It's not just the stress. Truly.'

'I know you believe it to be so. And hopefully was shall soon have some answers or at least some better questions to ask.'

'I'm not enjoying you being in the situation where you look after me so much.'

'And I suppose if I were to be ill you would do nothing and ignore it?..... you see there is no good answer to that is there. Please accord me the same spirit that you yourself would demonstrate if our roles were reversed. And I assure you one day they will be. When I am 100 you shall be a mere stripling of only 91.'

Will does laughs at that. 'I'll push you around in a bath chair'

'I shall grumble about the way dogs always trip you up when you're bringing tea to me'

'I'll hide that record by Taverner you play too much'

'I'll give away your worst flannel shirt that you've had for forty years and that you still love'

'I'll get it back'

'You are more likely to buy it back from a charity shop and think you have a fine bargain that looks just like one you had forty years ago.'

'Can I hide the Taverner now?'

'Wrong house. But I'd be glad of unspilled tea. Will you make some?'

'Sure.' Will goes out of the bathroom and Hannibal hears him say to one of the dogs 'don't trip me when I bring the tea ok?'

When Hannibal is dressed in pyjamas and Will in his preferred bedwear Hannibal takes out his tablet and emails his morning patients. He cites a family emergency and when Will is about to ask, he says

'My patients need to understand that whilst I have their interests at heart, they are not in my heart. I shall come to the lab with you and if need be sit in your office until you are done. But if you will permit me I would be glad to come with you for the scan.'

Will has a moment when he marvels that here in his soon to be forties he has found Hannibal. Someone as differently and equally odd as himself. Astonishing really. They both sleep.

.....

In the morning they wake to something of an uproar. Text after text from Jack, and Bev, and Brian. Firstly to what may be possibly be a Ripper kill, second to another Viking angel, and lastly to the return of Miriam Lass.

So, not dead then. Not another victim? Miriam Lass. Alive. Not exactly well. But alive.

Chapter End Notes

Getting so close to making this link to the next section. Wish me luck, see you on the other side!

Some say it will end in ice

Ok. Right. What the very actual fuck? Shit. A night is a long time in crime fighting batman!'

'Thank you Robin.'

'Wow. Hannibal, you know that one, how come?'

'I am not without culture Will'

'Yeah, just not usually either popular or contemporary.'

'Perhaps I am a man of hidden depths'

'And visible shallows?'

Hannibal gets his tight round the eyes look. Will moves on 'ok. This morning. I'm going to call Bev and find out the deal with all four things and then we'll prioritise.'

'Scan'

'Yeah definitely. Thing number one, at 11:30'

'Thank you Will'

Hannibal continues to make breakfast. The dogs look up at him hopefully. He ignores them. Will calls Beverly on the cell and puts it on speaker that they might both listen.

'Alright. Yeah. Well this is a whole lot of laughs. We're on our way to the angel. Just one of them this time. Jack's at the Ripper kill, losing his shit basically. Miriam's currently waiting to be interviewed. You will not believe what happened with her. I'll tell you what I know in a bit. Jack basically wants you to be in three places at once Will'

'Bev' Will interjects 'four places. Scan at 11:30. I can't miss it this time'

'Shit. Hey yeah. Is Dr Plushy Pants making you go this time? He looked well cross the last time you postponed it, does he know you've ..'

'Bev' Will interrupts 'do you remember being in the Quantico canteen and going on about how great Hannibal's arse is (Hannibal don't raise your eyebrows at me, you love it really) and I didn't know he was standing right behind me?'

'Yeah?'

'That'

'Oh shit. Am I on speaker? Omgg. Hey, hi Hannibal. Nice outdoors isn't it. What was I... right. Ok. Oops. Just thinking about timing. When's your appointment? It's in DC isn't it?'

'Yeah. 11:30. Where's the scene?'

'Angel is in DC, Ripper is in Baltimore'

'Ok, I'll come to you first and we'll go in from there'

Hannibal has a resigned look on his face, but he nods 'I will drive.' 'Thank you, that's nice of you'

.....

At the scene Jack has already arrived. Angry about the kill he's just come from. He and Hannibal probably overtook each other all the way from Baltimore to DC. It's clear from the get go that Jack and Will are gearing up for another shouting match.

When it kicks off the science team retreat, even Hannibal looks surprised, in an aside to Zeller he asks 'was it like this at the previous scene when Agent Crawford called me?'

'Honestly? No.'

Hannibal looks quite relieved,

'No. wait Dr L. This is worse. Actually worse. Jack is angrier at Will, and Will? This is a whole other order of angry.'

'Oh'

'Yeah. He'll calm down in a minute. Then he'll simmer for a bit. We were just uber nice to him last time and made sure we split him and Jack up for the rest of the day.'

'He has a scan in about an hour. He may be externalising the stress'

'Dunno if this is better or worse. Sorry Doc'

'It's alright Brian. You're a good friend to Will. It makes this easier knowing you and the others are all on side. If there can even be such a thing as a side in this.' Hannibal sighs. Will comes over.

'Well. Agent fucking Crawford wants me to go to the Ripper scene' he holds up a hand, just in case Hannibal is about to argue 'I've said no. He also wants me to interview Miriam Bloody Lass before anyone else fucking does. Also no to that too. I am a little bit upset in case that isn't obvious, because frankly I can't even tell as Agent did I say fucking? Because that's what I meant. Agent Fucking Crawford is frankly oblivious.'

He takes a deep shaky breath and then bends forwards at the waist resting his hands on his thighs. Like the recovery position but standing upright. He stays like that and Hannibal simply waits him out. Jimmy sidles over and hands Hannibal a take out coffee. He holds one in Will's line of sight and waggles it around. 'Coffee Will, with cinnamon and cardamom and a bit of cream and chocolate. Hmmmm. Yumm.'

Will breathes a bit more and stands up 'ok then. Thanks Jimmy. I owe you two coffees and a coke float now'

'Oh, I'm counting Will, like the Recording Angel' he pauses 'sorry, maybe not the best example given the circumstances'

Will smiles 'you're good. Thanks.' He sips the coffee 'ok this is weirdly nice. Thanks. Hannibal have you got the same?'

'No. I think Dr Price knows that my taste in coffee doesn't run to such exotica'

Jimmy smirks drinking his also normal coffee. 'We're in this together guys. Has Bev told you about Miriam?'

'Not yet. She said she would later'

'Ok. You know we were talking about Starling?'

'Yeah. So?'

'This is even better'

'Really?'

'You'll see'

'Will I'm reluctant to interrupt but we should leave soon.'

'Ok. I shall go and tell Agent, oh what ever, Crawford what's going on. Come rescue me if I'm not back in 5 minutes'

'Certainly'

.....

'Was it better or worse than you expected?'

'Not so bad actually, they had a feed instead of ear plugs. Hannibal talked to me the whole time. About Venice and Florence mainly. I think he wants to go next year.'

'With you?'

'I dunno. I'm not sure we're quite enough of a thing yet. Maybe he's just planting the idea'

'Yeah. Maybe that's it. He does seem like someone who would plan ahead'

'You're right, he does. He is'

'Will?'

'What? Oh nothing? Just. No. it's ok. I shouldn't say anything yet'

'Alright. When you want to though...Ok?. So what about the Ripper scene?'

'I told Jack it's not him. It's like him. But it's not got the real feel of it. The Ripper likes his kills to be a performance. An exhibition. Field kabuki. I'm a little afraid the thing with Gideon has prompted a copycat.'

'The victim is some kind of medic.'

'Oh ok. That might even fit with the Ripper. But I'm pretty sure not. I guess if we get any others we can think again. But overall. Not. Yet.'

'Fair enough. Did Hannibal take you?'

'Yeah straight from the scan. He knows the route between DC and Baltimore pretty well, he got me there in double quick time. Jack could barely complain'

'Didn't stop him, I bet'

'Not so much actually. I think shouting at him might have shocked him a bit. Especially twice. Yeah don't look like that. I'm not proud of myself'

'Did Hannibal say anything about you losing it?'

'It's just possible he liked that version rather than the shrinking violet version. You know Abigail completely messed with both of us over the photos, not once but fucking twice. I'm more than pissed at her. Hey, I meant to ask. You know Hannibal kidnapped me? He said he'd been at your place?'

'Yeah. He thought you were ditching him!'

'What!? I thought it was the other way round!'

Bev looks at him and raises an eyebrow 'I know. You're a right pair of bloody idiots. Just marry him and give us all a break'

Will doesn't say anything.

'Shit Will! You've thought about it haven't you?'

'Yes. I have. I know it's too soon. But you know I'm great (yeah right? Right) but I'm also pretty challenging. And frankly he's seen me at my worst over the last six months or so.'

'That's true. Wow. I won't say anything. Wow. Bags I'm a flower girl or something.'

'Bev, really. Not even a concrete thought yet'

'Sure. Ok. Miriam Lass. You ready for this?'

'Yeah. Poor girl. I actually feel really sorry for her. Did you talk to her?'

'Only to get her settled, explained you'd be a bit delayed. Got her a drink and some chocolate. Made sure she was basically ok. She's a bit scared.'

'Ok. So she knows I'm coming?'

'Yeah she does. You know she knows Starling. Jimmy said the two of you talked about her yesterday I think? Well. Miriam will tell you.'

.....

'Miriam, hello. You ok for food and drink? Yeah? You're not being detained. Just so you're clear. And I want to check you're ok with being recorded, it'll help us later.'

Miriam nods. She knows how this goes. She's been on the other side of the two way mirror enough times, looking in. But this is different, she clears her throat

'You're Will Graham aren't you? I've seen your picture in the press and on tattlecrime. You're kind of doing the job Clarice did. Is that right?'

'Agent Starling? Yes. That's right. Do you want to talk me through it?'

'You do this thing don't you? Sort of get a read?'

'I do. But that's usually when we're working a scene and with victims, well victims who are dead. I don't know about living witnesses. I've never been asked before. I can say the Basic read I'm getting off you right now is relief mixed with a bit of fear. Do you want to tell me about the relief bit first, is that ok?'

'Yes, thanks Agent Graham'

'Just Will is fine'

'Right. Will. Thank you..'

.....

Will is sitting in the small library in Hannibal's home. Hannibal has cooked and he is currently making coffee. Will is trying to get the fire to light. He'd initially wanted to check for a note from Mischa. There is one, a little old now. In it she mentions the photos being the cause of Hannibal's distance. Yeah, well he knows that now. Will sighs and gets his notepad out and quickly writes

#Mischa, the photo thing was all very stupid. All sorted I hope. I really hope. Always encourage Hannibal to actually talk to me! I know both of us have to learn new relationship behaviours. And that's hard. We're both a bit set in our ways. I'll try harder. Went for scan today. Results in a week or three. Hope You're Ok? Love Will#

He gets the message into the book just in time as Hannibal comes in bringing a tray with coffee, cream and biscotti.

'Ahh. The fire. I should have the chimney swept'

'I know someone. I could ask them?'

'That would be a kindness thank you. I'll let you know some possible times and dates'

'Ok, great. I can always stop by if you're too busy.'

'Thank you Will'

They smile at each other.

'Thanks for this morning, and last night. I know it's a lot at the present. Before I was in the field it was much better. It will be better, I'm pretty sure it will be'

'I know. I am hopeful too. Don't forget to make an appointment to see Donald to get the results back.'

'Yeah. I won't. Well, I will. But then I'll remember and actually get round to it, do you want to hear about Miriam Lass?'

'Jack's disappearing agent?'

'Yes, that's right'

'If you can. I admit to some curiosity. But before that I must confess something to you'

'Ok. This sounds interesting.'

'The day at the BSCHI, when you were looking at Gideon's kill. I'm afraid that the orderly who took you to the medical room'

'Yeah. What about him?'

'We didn't realise, from the closed circuit TV, until after he'd left you. But I'm afraid it was Matthew Brown. Frederick says he has been working there for a couple of months.'

'Has he fuck! I'm a little bit pissed you didn't say anything' Will pauses and blows out a sharp breath 'but on top if everything else I might have completely lost it. So, probably, on this occasion, good call.'

'I am sorry. I realise that given your previous experience, for you to have found out from someone else would have been distressing. It would seem like a deliberate omission. I have been waiting for the least worst time to tell you. I am sorry it was not sooner.'

'You're pretty great aren't you?'

Hannibal smiles 'I am trying very hard to improve my communication skills. Particularly when they are fuelled by strong emotion'

'It's a challenge isn't it? I don't find it that easy either. It was fine when it was just me living my little life. But my life has got bigger.'

'Do you regret that?'

'It has you in it now. Sure the others are pretty extraordinary. But you are unparalleled. I had no idea you could even exist'

his voice is tight in his throat. His emotion holding on to all the words that could spill out. He takes hold of Hannibal's hand. Just sits beside him, rubbing his thumb in small circles and along the lines on Hannibal's palm.

'If I could read this, I'd say I'd want your life line to be long and see your love line running alongside it, unbroken. I know I'm a bit broken at the moment. But you still make me feel More human than anyone else ever has.'

'Will' he leans over and kisses him. They sit beside each other on the couch, just resting there. Will smiles and sighs

'Ok. So. The protection circle thing. They said there's a storm coming. I hope we'll weather it together. Let me tell you about Miriam Lass. She's weathered something extraordinary'

They settle more comfortably into the couch and beside each other.

.....

The story takes about an hour to tell. At the end they're both a little strung out.

'Will you stay tonight? I would be grateful if you would'

'Yeah. Me too. The stuff yesterday? I've been finding it hard to stay there. On my own. Since Matthew Sodding Brown. He's kind of made me feel frightened to be there. The stag guys?'

Hannibal nods 'oh yes, forgive me I meant to say' he stops. Suddenly. He remembers it was Mischa who told him this 'no, it's nothing, please carry on' Will looks at him enquiringly 'really, please continue'

'Alright then. So, they came to Wolf Trap. Bev and I saw them. It's why Jack sent round the email calling off the surveillance. They're not coming back until the spring. That's what I meant about a storm coming. They seem to think there's going to be a big deal. Where not everything is as it seems. They saw Matthew Brown at a Wolf Trap the night of the photos. The younger man thinks it's already starting. If he means the Abigail Hobbs stuff, he's right. He meant my head too. We'll need to be careful. Are you still seeing her?'

'Yes. Weekly. For the time being. Are you going to reduce interactions with her?'

'Yup. I'm staying away from her and the BSCHI! no matter what Alana says'

'Have you noted down Matthew Brown's interactions?'

'Yes. Way ahead of you.' Will fishes out his note pad 'sadly it's a bit harder to describe the menace. Maybe I'd feel ok about it or not so bothered if I just felt physically better' he sighs 'is it really screwed up I want to be ill? It is a bit isn't it?'

'Understandable though'

'Yeah sure'

'You haven't told me about the Ripper. Have you had any further thoughts since this morning?'

'Yeah. I told Jack I'm 90% sure it's not the Ripper. It's his victimology, but the rest? Not unless we see another kill or two. I don't think so. I said to Bev that I see the Ripper but I don't feel him.'

'Do you want to?'

'That's no and yes really. No because his kills are truly terrible for the victims. But, and, I know this doesn't sound great, but his kills are also extraordinary. This didn't feel quite right. I think it's a copycat. Maybe because of Gideon.'

'Could the Ripper have changed his MO?'

'I've been wondering that. But still. It's not the same. I have to realise too that I might just not be able to see him'

'Not in the right mind to see him?'

'Something like that. Shall we try and sleep? Will you stay with me?'

'Of course, you go on ahead. I'll damp the fire down. I'll be along in a moment.'

Will smiles and goes out the door.

Hannibal reaches for his tablet and refreshes tattlecrime. The new page loads. It's an exclusive about Miriam Lass. He closes it down and switches it off altogether.

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"Two years ago we reported the sudden and possibly tragic disappearance of one of the FBIs newest and brightest. Miriam Lass. A PHD and honour roll student, a bright and popular agent in training, Ms Lass went missing whilst assigned with tracking the notorious Chesapeake Ripper.

Just days ago we brought you an exclusive about Abel Gideon, an inmate at the BSCHI possibly identified as the Ripper himself. But Ms Lass calls all that into question. For Ms Lass has returned.

As the youngest member of Senior Agent Jack Crawford's Behavioural Analysis Unit Lass was part of a team following leads sometimes on the thinnest of conjecture and guesswork.

Dogged and committed, Lass found herself further and further out on a limb. Until one day that limb broke.

After a series of interviews with various surgeons, doctors and assorted medical professionals Lass realised she was effectively becoming bait for the Ripper. And with Agent Crawford willing to break all and every rule Miriam Lass made a decision that might just have saved her life.

Regular readers will remember a previous member of the BAU Agent Clarice Starling, now heading an FBI field office in Nebraska. Agent Starling also fell foul of Jack Crawford's willingness to slip things under the wire if he smelled a suspect. She too got out. Before it got her out. But it was a close run thing.

And it is to her that Ms Lass turned in her hour of need. Staging her abduction and disappearance, Ms Lass has been living quietly on a ranch out in, wait for it, Nebraska, keeping her head down. Praying that neither the Ripper nor Jack Crawford would find her.

So why make herself visible now? This is what she had to say in an exclusive interview with tattlecrime.com

'I saw the piece about Abel Gideon. He claims he killed me, just that I haven't been found. He didn't kill me. I got away. It means he can't be the Ripper. Maybe he wants the notoriety. Maybe he just doesn't know. He is in a hospital for the criminally insane. I don't want anyone giving up on the hunt for the Ripper. From what I saw he is a truly devilish man. But Gideon isn't the Ripper. I felt I couldn't just let that go. Even if it means compromising my own safety.'

We asked Agent Crawford what he had to say about the news that there might be a new Ripper kill just this week he had this to say 'we're looking closely at the death. At the moment there isn't any conclusive evidence. So we're keeping an open mind' when asked about the reappearance of his former protégée Agent Crawford had only this to say 'I'm just glad Miriam is alright'.

We've reported here previously that current lead profiler Dr Will Graham is investigating the Ripper murders. Just what will he make of the miraculous resurrection of Miriam Lass

I hold with those who favour fire

Chapter Summary

The fall out from Miriam Lass's reappearance, and the end of the angel maker...

In the morning it starts to become a little clearer what the fallout from Miriam Lass's reappearance is likely to be. In a neat piece of spinning dizzying footwork the FBI have put out a statement saying that Miriam has been in the Witness Protection programme for the last two years, and that her case has been handled by none other than, you've guessed it Agent Clarice Starling.

Clarice in the meantime, perhaps mindful of her own position, has issued her own statement backing up both Miriam and the FBI. The implication is that Freddie Lounds has the wrong end of the stick, and that this was a deliberate move by Agent Jack Crawford to protect his overexposed and threatened agent in training.

It's a narrow squeak. Will is rather sceptical. It's a reminder of Jack's willingness to stretch the rules, and of the higher ups to cover for and protect Jack as well as other Senior Agents.

Still, the upside is that neither Clarice Starling nor Miriam Lass can be officially sanctioned by the FBI. Indeed is there anywhere more remote or dead end a posting that Clarice can be sent to than Nebraska?

Beverly and the science bros meet Will in the lab early in the afternoon. They can only agree it's been well played. In so doing they reluctantly turn their attention back to the Angel Maker. Unusually for them though they know who the perpetrator is, they've met his wife and heard the backstory, and know the tumour he is experiencing is terminal. The issue is whether or not he will take anyone else down with him.

They are resigned to yet another overnight. Given the killer's trajectory, modus operandi and timetable it's likely to be within the next 36 hours. They're currently caught in limbo and somewhat pissed off that they are stuck. Will knows that Hannibal is also on standby. After two verbal meltdowns Jack is taking no chances with Will in the field.

To say that Will is annoyed is an understatement. He's feeling the pinch between the person Jack uses to keep him ok, and the person Will is with that makes him most ok. Will and Hannibal have talked about this. If Jack wanted a formal discussion or write up, Hannibal would refer Will. But Jack doesn't, it suits him to keep it fuzzy for as long as possible. So Hannibal and Will are in a different kind of limbo, neither an official patient being treated or an unofficial one receiving support. Maybe it means that neither are quite secure, perhaps in either relationship.

They sit in the benches in the lab, Bev swinging her feet randomly. They can't really get anything started. Have exhausted current stuff. Just the unglamorous bit of the job. It's not all blood and brilliance.

Federal Bureau of Irritation

Funny business incrementally

Fucking bloody idiots

They carry on like this for a while.

In the end the four of them head to the canteen and eat over processed food and drink too much coffee and other caffeinated beverages. When the call does come it's not really what they've been expecting. Elliott Buddish has strung himself to the rafters of a barn. An angelic messenger of his own making, though just how on earth did he get up there?

The team spend an hour's drive through the afternoon to get there. When Will passes out everyone silently agrees that it was a good thing that Hannibal got the call at the same time as them.

When Will wakes up, he's lying on a bed in what is clearly a slightly awful motel room. Beverly is sitting in the crappy armchair watching something excruciating on her tablet, she turns it round so Will can see, something terrible with flying sharks.

'Where's Hannibal?'

'What? No "hi Bev, how are you babe? What's happening? Have you really sat here for two hours and missed dinner and the bar? Just to keep me company whilst I snore my silly arse off"?'

'Sorry Bev. I shouted at Jack again didn't I?'

'And the rest. Jimmy and Brian actually carried you to the car. Hannibal brought you inside'

Will groans 'tell me that's the worst thing?'

'Yeah, that's it. Well, unless you think it looking all bridal over the threshold makes it worse? Either way, isn't that bad enough?'

'Yeah. Probably. Thanks Bev. Sorry about dinner. Can I buy you some?'

'Yeah. You can'

'What happened to Hannibal?'

'Oh yeah, you'll like this, he and Jack have gone to have a little discussion shall we say.'

'Oh. Ok. That doesn't sound good'

'I think it started loud and got quieter. Hannibal is in some other motel, they didn't have room here'

'He usually gets a nicer place anyway.'

'Thought so. He and Jack have gone to have dinner or drinks or something, to continue their "discussion"' she air quotes the word, and looks a bit sheepish 'I said I'd rather stay with you anyway, that Hannibal should go, better for him to run offence with Jack, sorry if that was wrong?'

'Nah. I think you're right. I'm just fed up with it all. Shall we go and eat something, hang out with the guys?'

'Sure Will, sounds good. They were trying to play pool earlier'

'Really?'

'Yup'

'This I gotta see. Did I say I'd spring for dinner? Cos I will?

'Yeah, you will'

'Me Will! You Bev'

'That's worse than awful'

'Hannibal is a bad influence.'

They both laugh..

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